

vegetation, but, further, we can modify its course, delay the action of certain functions, or enlarge the development and the modification of certain organs. The author further remarks, that if its use be ill-directed, it may cause accidents. Those which have occurred in the course of his experiments appear to him to throw an unexpected light upon the mechanism of the nutrition of plants. They have at least taught him at the expense of what care ammonia may become an auxiliary of vegetation. These experiments, which were made under the same conditions as those upon the absorption of azote, are then described, and their numerical results given.

To the conclusions already stated, the author adds that there are periods to be selected for the employment of ammonia, during which this gas produces different effects. If we commence its use when several months intervene before the flowering season of the plants, it produces no disturbance; they follow the ordinary course of their vegetation. If its use be commenced at the time of flowering, this function is stopped or delayed. The plant covers itself with leaves, and if the flowering takes place all the flowers are barren.—*Proc. Roy. Soc.* May 26, 1853.

*On the Priority of the Discovery of the Mode of Action of the Pholades in the Perforation of Stones.* By M. VROLIK.

The question of the perforation of rocks by Pholades, which has been brought before the Academy of Sciences, has given rise to a claim of priority put forward by Mr. Robertson, and since contested by M. Caillaud.

The Academy will not be displeased to learn that Professor Vrolik of Amsterdam has just shown that the fact of mechanical perforation by the valves, and as the result of the simple movement of the Pholades, without the assistance of any acid, was described more than seventy years ago by Léendert Bomme, a Director of the Commercial Company of Middelbourg. His memoir, in which he enters into many details respecting the œconomy of these animals, which in 1759 and 1760 threatened the destruction of the dykes of the island of Walcheren, was published in the Transactions of the Scientific Society of Flessingen.—*Comptes Rendus*, May 2, 1853.

*On Sun Columns observed at Sandwick Manse, Orkney.*

By the Rev. C. CLOUSTON.

May 18th. About 8 P.M. observed a mock sun having prismatic colours, on the N. side of the sun, with rays on the off side converging to a point. In about 15 minutes another of the same description, but fainter, appeared on the S. side of the sun, and a faint halo appeared over the sun, as if joining there. At sunset there was a faint sun pillar.

21st. At sunset another sun pillar seen.

23rd. A sun pillar seen tonight at 8 P.M., about 45 minutes before sunset, at first being a pale whitish beam, shooting up through the